



# Florida House of Representatives

*Representative William D. Snyder*

District 82

**District Office:**

2400 South Federal Hwy.  
Suite 250  
Stuart, FL 34994-4590  
(772) 221-4904  
(772- 221-4906 fax

**Tallahassee Office:**

410 House Office Building  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
(850) 488-8832

Email: William.Snyder@myfloridahouse.gov

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**Contact: William Snyder**

(850) 488-8832

## FLORIDA LEGISLATURE PASSES HISTORIC DNA REFORM

**TALLAHASSEE, FL** –The Florida Legislature today passed Senate Bill (SB) 2276 sponsored by Senator Steve Oelrich (R-Gainesville) and Representative William Snyder (R-Stuart). This comprehensive legislation makes major reforms to Florida's DNA database. Under current law, DNA is collected at the time of conviction for all felonies and specified misdemeanors. SB 2276 requires felony arrestees to provide a DNA sample for forensic analysis at the time of arrest.

"This legislation will provide the Florida Department of Law Enforcement with another important tool to correctly identify felony offenders and quickly solve crimes that otherwise might result in dangerous perpetrators remaining on the streets and in our communities for too long," commented Senator Oelrich. "This is landmark legislation in the State of Florida, and I am honored to be a part of it."

"In current law, several months and even years can elapse before a suspect is convicted," said Representative Snyder, sponsor of the House bill. "Collecting DNA at the time of arrest will prevent countless crimes and help solve thousands more. Government's primary role is protection of its citizens, and collecting DNA at the time of arrest is a key instrument that law enforcement will utilize to preserve that safety."

Attorney General Bill McCollum, a strong supporter of the bill, said, "This legislation gives law enforcement the use of the latest technology to keep our streets safe and to protect the rights of the innocent. I commend Representative William Snyder and Senator Steve Oelrich for their leadership and hard work in passing this legislation."

(more)

**Committees:**

Policy Council  
Criminal & Civil Justice Policy Council, Chair  
Criminal & Civil Justice Appropriations Committee

Joint Committee on Everglades Oversight, Chair  
Full Appropriations Council on General Government & Health Care

John Walsh, host of the TV show *America's Most Wanted*, also spoke out in support of the legislation. "By collecting DNA upon a felony arrest, we can use science to find the murderers and rapists before they can harm anyone again," Walsh said. "Florida needs this law, and I am thankful for the Legislature's commitment to protecting the citizens of Florida."

To date, 16 other states have passed and implemented legislation authorizing the collection of DNA samples from felony arrestees. SB 2276 provides a phase-in schedule that expands DNA collection to all persons arrested for felony offenses by 2019. This comprehensive approach ensures that the funding and infrastructure is in place for the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to implement this major policy change.

The legislation also adds protections for the disclosure of DNA records and samples, and creates penalties for intentionally disclosing, tampering or using DNA records for purposes other than those specified by law.

Senate Bill 2276 now awaits the Governor's signature.

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